

## INTRODUCTION

An unusual combination of land, people, and events has given the Uinta National Forest and surrounding areas a unique place in history. Within the current National Forest boundary is land originally included in the first Forest Reserve established in the State of Utah on February 22, 1897, one year after Utah received statehood. Large portions of the original Uintah Forest Reserve were later incorporated into the Ashley and Wasatch National Forests.

Like all National Forests in Utah, the Uinta was created at the request of local communities. Although early European-American settlers tried to use the land wisely, they did not fully understand the basic facts of ecology. By the 1890's, many of the range, timber and watershed resources of the Uinta and Wasatch Mountains were seriously depleted. The newly created Forest Service was seen as the best organization to turn this around. Its mission was to manage these public lands for the best use by the largest number of people. This goal continues today, with the addition of greater knowledge about how ecosystems function. This means managing resources under the best combination of uses to benefit the American people while ensuring the long term health of all parts of the ecosystem.

One of the things that makes the Uinta National Forest unique is the degree to which these goals have been promoted by local community leaders and organizations. For example, private lands above the eastern edge of Utah Valley were added to the Uinta as a result of lobbying by Dr. Vasco M. Tanner and the Provo Chamber of Commerce, who were

concerned about repeated flooding off the overgrazed lands. Citizens of Juab County pressed for reforestation in Salt Creek in the earlier part of this century, and even helped plant thousands of the trees themselves. Watershed rehabilitation projects in Santaquin Canyon in the 1950's were a cooperative effort between Santaquin, Genola, Utah County and the Forest Service. More examples of these kinds of partnerships are described in the pages to come.

In telling the story of the development of the Uinta National Forest and the surrounding area, we will set the stage for early land use, the creation of the Forest, and its subsequent management. Our focus will be on the relationship between the people of the nearby settled valleys and their forests. By looking through the eyes of the Native Americans, early European settlers, Forest Service leaders and those who have built from their foundations, perhaps we can better understand how to prepare for resource management challenges in the future.

This document revises and updates the Forest History created as part of the celebration of the Forest's 75th Anniversary; *Utah's First Forest's First 75 Years*. Its purpose is to convey the unique history of the Uinta National Forest, its successes in resource management and challenges for the future.

